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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 001496

SIPDIS

NICOSIA FOR DRENZ/A/S DEWEY  
DEPT FOR PRM  
DEPT PASS AID FOR DHCA/OFDA - WGARVELINK  
EUCOM FOR J3, J5, SOJ7 AND POLAD  
CENTCOM FOR J3, J5 AND POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/05/2013  
TAGS: [EAID](#) [IZ](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR VISIT OF A/S DEWEY AND  
HUMANITARIAN DELEGATION

REF: ANKARA 1335

(U) Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Deutsch for  
Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

Summary:

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[11.](#) (C) The Turkish Parliament,s March 1 vote rejecting deployment of U.S. troops, along with a worsening in Turkish-Kurdish tensions, has shaken the GOT and has increased the uncertainty surrounding Turkey,s ultimate choices on Iraq. Whether or not there will be a Northern Option, your visit on humanitarian assistance planning provides the USG with a good opportunity to craft a cooperative approach to assistance and to maintain our dialogue with Turkey. Key issues for your discussions include: explaining our humanitarian strategy in Iraq as it affects Turkey; encouraging cooperation with NGOs and international organizations; establishing a framework for coordination with the GOT and others in this area. End Summary.

Aftermath of the March 1 Parliamentary Vote

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[12.](#) (C) Parliament March 1 rejected the AK (Justice and Development) Party Government's petition to permit deployment of U.S. troops to Turkey. A number of factors contributed to the outcome, particularly: 1) strong anti-war sentiment in the public, media, in Parliament on both sides of the aisle, and other organs of the Turkish state; 2) the secular Turkish State's fears about USG intentions in Iraq; 3) a desire by the traditional State to undercut the Islamist-oriented AK; and 4) AK's own internal political dynamics, rivalries, and ineptitude. The AK Government is now badly shaken. AK leader R. Tayyip Erdogan and P.M. Abdullah Gul were weakened, and U.S.-Turkish relations have come under strain despite affirmations on both sides. Erdogan and Gul have hinted that the defeated proposal could resurface in another form. Many observers believe it is not likely to emerge until after Erdogan, who was elected to Parliament in a special March 9 election, becomes the Prime Minister.

[13.](#) (SBU) Turkish relations with the Kurdish entities in northern Iraq have been particularly strained in recent days. The population and leadership of northern Iraq is solidly opposed to Turkish intervention on humanitarian or other grounds. On March 3, tens of thousands (some reports place the figure at 300,000 or more) demonstrators in Irbil marched in protest and several burned Turkish flags. The Iraqi opposition in its conference final statement February 28 rejected the prospect of Turkish military intervention. The Iraqi Kurds have not given their agreement to have Turkish camps set up in the areas the KDP and PUK control, to have the Turkish Red Crescent operate there, nor to have additional Turkish troops stationed there. The Turks are reacting harshly to these statements and to the demonstrations. In a recent media interview, U/S Grossman cautioned against unilateral Turkish intervention in Iraq.

GOT Contingency Planning

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[14.](#) (C) Turkey has done contingency planning for a humanitarian crisis both on an internal, interagency basis and with international organizations. It has designated airports (Gaziantep, Van and Erzurum) for humanitarian use.

MFA told us on March 6 that it may open the port of Mersin, which is currently reserved for military use, to humanitarian needs. The GOT plans to establish 18 humanitarian aid collection zones<sup>8</sup>, to be run by the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC), in northern Iraq and Turkey which could handle up to 276,000 refugees/displaced persons, but the GOT has said it will try to serve populations in need on the Iraqi side of their common border. Turkey plans to repatriate displaced persons as soon as the security situation would permit this. Turkey has not attempted to coordinate its aid plan with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) or the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), on whose territory the GOT intends to provide relief. As we understand, the Department has taken a decision not to press Turkey to admit asylum seekers, and Embassy recommends that we not/not press the Turks to do so during your visit.

15. (SBU) TRC has pre-positioned some resources, but there are gaps (principally tents) in its ability to respond in the event the full 276,000 persons need relief, in part because TRC is not supposed to dedicate more than 60 percent of its capacity to any single crisis.

#### NGOs

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16. (SBU) The GOT has been wary of NGOs, and few have been able to officially register. Since 1996, the Turkish-Iraqi border has been closed to NGOs with very few exceptions. MFA told the Humanitarian Planning Team (HPT) that NGOs seeking to provide assistance to displaced persons in Turkey or in the border zone on Iraqi territory would have to register with the GOT, sign an MOU defining the scope of their activities, and coordinate with the TRC and/or UN agencies. MFA told us the GOT would be more flexible with respect to NGOs seeking to transit Turkey to deliver relief beyond the border zone in Iraq. The GOT is willing in principle to approve applications on an ad hoc basis for NGOs focused on humanitarian relief, rather than human rights or political activism. The International Rescue Committee has sent a representative to Turkey to make application, and other NGOs are expected to follow soon.

#### Coordinating Assistance

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17. (C) The GOT plans to establish crisis/coordination centers in the Prime Ministry, MFA, Diyarbakir, Gaziantep and Van, among others, in the event of a conflict in Iraq. MFA has also identified 42 diplomats to staff these centers. However, the GOT has been reluctant to activate any of them far in advance of a crisis. In January, the HPT raised the importance of coordination between civilian and military planners in both our governments, as well as between them and international organizations and NGOs, pointing to the positive example of the Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC) in Kuwait. Embassy has urged the Turks to act on this recommendation.

18. (C) Meanwhile, EUCOM/Military Coordination Liaison Command (MCLC) are developing plans for a Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center (HACC) or Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC) in Diyarbakir. However, some USG agencies have raised concerns that this configuration may not be as open to international humanitarian organizations and NGOs as other possible structures. MCLC Commanding General Peter Osman will be in Ankara during your visit, providing an opportunity to consult internally on this issue. Maj. General Osman would like to participate in your meetings with the GOT.

19. (C) MFA has asked for a specific proposal, and has said it would like to establish guidelines or even an MOU on the coordination mechanism. The GOT will expect to discuss this further with you during your meetings on March 12.

#### Program and Recommendations

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110. (SBU) Embassy is arranging the following appointments for March 12: mini-country team; an interagency meeting including MFA, Prime Ministry, Turkish General Staff (TGS), and Interior Ministry representatives, led by MFA Undersecretary for Multilateral Political Affairs; lunch with UN agencies; separate meeting with TGS; meeting with Turkish Red Crescent President; reception hosted by the Ambassador. As noted above, MCLC Commanding General Osman would like to

join the delegation for meetings with the GOT.

11. (C) Embassy recommends focusing on the following issues during your meetings with GOT officials:

-- Overview of U.S. Strategy: Emphasize our intention to minimize displacement and damage to humanitarian infrastructure in the event of a conflict, and that this will in turn work in Turkey's interest by keeping the number of potential asylum seekers as low as possible.

-- Role of International Organizations/NGOs: Note that USG assistance will be channeled mainly through UN agencies and other humanitarian organizations. Applaud Turkish cooperation with UN agencies and positive signals on NGO access to Iraq. Encourage the GOT to give expeditious and favorable consideration to NGO applications, to the World Food Program's registration in Turkey, and to the MOU governing UN activities when presented by the UN. Note that we and other organizations will naturally seek to procure relief supplies locally once it is clear that aid can transit through Turkey.

-- Coordination: Encourage the GOT to activate a crisis center and establish a coordinating mechanism for humanitarian assistance as soon as possible. We should seek, if at all possible, to present as much detail on our thinking for this mechanism (HACC, HOC or other). This will help deflect the Turkish inclination to define it by means of an MOU or other written guidelines.

-- Turkish Role in Northern Iraq: The GOT foresees a large role for its Society in Northern Iraq, but the ICRC will have the mandate for coordinating relief in conflict zones and the KDP and PUK have their own contingency plans. Urge the Turks to coordinate humanitarian assistance.

PEARSON